



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

Advice for Travelers about SARS

Background

- Severe acute respiratory syndrome ([SARS](#)) is a new respiratory disease linked to travel to mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Hanoi (Vietnam).
- In general, SARS starts with a fever higher than 100.4°F [$>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$]. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also feel short of breath. After 3 to 7 days, the person may get a dry cough and have trouble breathing.
- Public health experts think that SARS is spread by close contact between people. For example, the disease can spread from someone who is sick with SARS to healthcare workers who have taken care of them or to family members. It is most likely spread when someone sick with SARS coughs droplets into the air and someone else breathes them in. It is possible that SARS also can spread more broadly through the air or from touching objects that have become contaminated. SARS does not seem to spread easily by casual contact in large groups of people.
- The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are still looking into the causes of SARS.
- For more on SARS, go to www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/index.htm.
- New facts about SARS come up daily. Get the latest on how many people have SARS and what countries are touched, at www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/sars.htm and www.who.int/csr/sarscountry/en/

Before you travel

- Don't go to mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Hanoi, unless you really have to. You can still go to Canada. SARS doesn't seem to spread there right now.
- Be sure you are current on all your shots. See your health care provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before travel to get the latest shots and facts you need. For more on CDC health advice for travel abroad, see www.cdc.gov/travel.
- Check your health insurance. You may want to get more coverage for medical evacuation in case you get sick abroad. For more on this, go to www.travel.state.gov/medical.html.
- Ask the U.S. Department of State (DOS) about health care services in the country where you're going. DOS has a list of foreign health care providers and health care facilities at www.travel.state.gov/acs.html#medical.

If you get sick while traveling in an area affected by SARS

- See a health care provider and say that you're worried about being exposed to SARS.
- Don't travel while sick. Limit your contact with others as much as you can to help prevent the spread of any contagious disease you may have.
- If you don't know of any provider in the foreign country, call the U.S. embassy or consulate to get the name of a provider.
- As with all contagious diseases, the best way to not get sick is to wash your hands often with soap and water. If you don't have soap and water, use alcohol-based hand rubs.

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When you come back home from areas affected by SARS

- If you were sick on your trip or return home sick, see your health care provider right away. Mention your symptoms and the countries you visited. You may be asked to fill out a form about your disease and give your name and address to public health authorities.
- If you leave an area affected by SARS, a screener may ask you about your health before you board the plane.
- If you come back from areas affected by SARS, you will get a travel alert card when you land. If you're not sick and didn't get sick abroad but may have been in touch with someone with SARS, check your health for the next 10 days.